

# Certified Batterer Intervention Programs and Fatherhood Programs: What's the Difference?

This fact sheet is a resource for those who seek appropriate services for perpetrators of intimate partner violence. Fatherhood programs, often referred to as Nurturing Fatherhood Programs or Responsible Fatherhood Programs, can be a valuable resource for fathers. However, they are not intended to address intimate partner violence. Fatherhood program directors say that fatherhood programs should not be used as a replacement for Certified Batterer Intervention Programs. While Certified Batterer Intervention Programs address parenting, their primary focus is to help people build skills for making non-violent choices. These programs also provide contact with partners, assess and make referrals for substance abuse and mental health problems.

Questions	Fatherhood Programs	Certified Batterer Intervention
<b>What are the purposes of intervention?</b>	To promote father re-engagement and/or to strengthen relationships with children, to teach understanding of children's needs, and to teach parenting skills.	To help participants identify all forms of abusive behavior and how it affects their partners and children. To teach participants how to avoid abusive behavior and to learn and practice behaviors that support healthy and respectful relationships.
<b>Who is served by the programs?</b>	Fathers, step-fathers, and father figures whether or not they have custody of their children	Domestic violence offenders, including those with children and step-children.
<b>How long are programs?</b>	Varies greatly from as low as 5 weeks to 20 weeks, typically 1.5 to 2.5 hours per session	40 sessions with a minimum of 2 hours per session.
<b>Do the programs address domestic violence/intimate partner violence?</b>	Not typically, although some programs might devote 1-2 sessions to this topic.	All 40 sessions are devoted to this topic
<b>Are group facilitators trained about domestic violence?</b>	There are no requirements for this.	State standards specify 24 hours of specialized training at a certified batterer intervention program site and 12 hours of group observation.
<b>Do programs assess participants for dangerousness?</b>	No	Yes. Programs utilize established procedures for identifying risk factors to lethality and re-assaults, and for managing risk.
<b>Do programs contact intimate partners of program participants to provide information and referrals?</b>	No	Yes. The program contacts the intimate partners to inform them of what to expect from the batterer intervention program, to make referrals to appropriate services, to conduct safety planning, and to provide information to help protect the children. If the partner chooses, the program will provide regular contact,
<b>How is participant progress evaluated?</b>	Based primarily on program attendance.	Based on attendance and level of participation. Participants must be violence-free for 20 weeks to be eligible for program completion.
<b>Are programs a part of coordinated community responses to domestic violence?</b>	No	Yes. This often includes participation in domestic violence high risk teams, domestic violence roundtables, partnerships with victim advocacy programs and outreach with community agencies.
<b>Are the programs certified and/or monitored by a state agency?</b>	No	Yes. The Programs are certified and monitored by the Massachusetts Department of Public Health.

Certified batterer intervention programs provide tailored services to meet the needs of linguistic and cultural minorities (with groups in Spanish, Portuguese, and Vietnamese), perpetrators with disabilities, same-sex offenders, DCF-referred fathers who batter, and adolescent perpetrators.

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